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### **Minutes of the INTER-RAC Meeting, Bruxelles 28 September 2012**

The agenda of the meeting developed according to the questions of the consultation on Advisory Councils sent by DGMARE.

The more important aspects raised are the followings:

-there is still uncertainty on how regionalization will be realized, as you already know, not all RACs have the same views on it, but we all agree on the importance to stress the specificities of every RAC/AC.

-several RACs, among which MEDRAC, affirmed that the work done by the RACs should be linked to the research activities, and that the development of LTMP will play a fundamental role in the future. MEDRAC underlined that the ACs will have an interest in being consulted upstream while the EC is in the process of defining technical measures

-MEDRAC proposed to postpone the deadline of the consultation due to the need of translating it into 4 languages and we would like to discuss it during our next General Assembly that will be held on November 5 in Rome. Lowri Evans replied giving us the possibility to submit the consultation in mid-November.

- Several RACs underlined the need to involve Member States in order to have a more active participation. LD RAC proposed DG MARE, with the support of all the RACs, to organize a seminar with all the RACs and Member States on the future role and mandate of the RACs financing it through the remaining financial resources that each RAC will have to refund to the EC. DG MARE took note of it.

-NWWRAC asked clarifications on the way EC will finance all the RACs, including also the new AC on aquaculture, AC on Black sea and AC on outermost regions. DG MARE replied that the financial coverage will remain the same and will have to be distributed among all the ACs. Referring to the last AC, since it has been proposed by the Council, the way to finance will have to be found by it.

-BSRAC proposed a better use of the article 30 of the proposal regulation on the EMFF, in order to establish ways of co-management among different fish activities. Furthermore, they suggested a joint presentation by DG MARE and DG RESEARCH of ongoing projects that might be interesting for RACs. DG MARE replied that the EC agrees with co-management, but the Council is not in favor of it. It has been noted that several MS rather prefer the micromanagement, they do not want to decentralize the decision-making process, so through better cooperation we will have to create more confidence.



-Referring to funding, all RACs agreed on the need to simplify the RACs access to any other EU funded projects as it would entail both a broadening of fisheries related issues knowledge and a financial return. Moreover all the RACs agree that it is up to each RAC to decide on the level of contribution of their membership fees. MED RAC asked clarifications with reference to question n.7 *“What other sources of funding could ACs identify and draw from?”* , Especially what it is meant by other sources. DGMARE replied that through “other sources” they are only referring to project funding.

- Lowri Evans affirmed that also the Commissioner Damanaki realized that funding should privilege basin level research project instead of basic research, thus providing an added value to stakeholders. She also informed us that there are available funds for the South Mediterranean area projects, but DG MARE has to investigate on how to make them available. DG MARE will also try to help and facilitate access to the FP7 and Horizon 2020.

- Referring to the representativeness and the definition of small scale fisheries within the RACs the LDRAC informed that at FAO level the definition include also the socio-economic criteria. DG MARE underlined that within the RACs all the sectors have the same degree of representation and the creation of an ad hoc forum on artisanal fisheries seems unnecessary. In the future EMFF some ad hoc measures are foreseen to better represent artisanal fishery.

-Referring to the decisions adopted by consensus, DG Mare stressed that although advices are taken by consensus it is not automatic that DG MARE will assume them as they are. Consensus is generally a sign of good practice among all RACs but dissenting opinions should always be reported.

- Referring to aquaculture given that there are three major aquaculture producers association, representing almost 95% of aquaculture in Europe the actual institutional organization of the RACs doesn't seem necessary and it was agreed that there should be only one RAC dealing with aquaculture in all the EU. To facilitate the setting up process and participation of DG MARE they are willing to base their headquarter in Brussels.

